

Ban on Begging

Why in News?

Bhopal district collector recently issued orders to prohibit begging in the district, Madhya Pradesh after Indore.

- Bhopal has prohibited begging across all public places, including including registration of FIRs for receiving and giving alms.
- **Governing law** - The orders are under **section 163** of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.
- This law gives officials including the district magistrate, sub-divisional magistrate or any other executive magistrate, the power to issue an order in urgent cases of 'nuisance or apprehended danger'.
- The order can direct any person from abstaining from a certain act.
- It may apply to persons residing in a particular place or area, or the public generally frequenting or visiting a particular place or area.
- **Punishments** - The section punishes those disobeying an order announced by a public servant.
- If an order under the section is not obeyed, the person can be punished with simple imprisonment for a term **up to 6 months**, fine up to Rs 2500, or both.
- If the disobedience of the order causes or tends to cause danger to human life, health or safety, imprisonment can be extended to **1 year** and the fine to Rs 5000.
- The act also says that an order under the section shall remain in force for not more than two months, provided the state government considers it necessary that the order remain in force for a period not exceeding **6 months**.
- Orders under the section-erstwhile section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code are extended periodically if required by issuing fresh orders.
- **Begging related laws** - Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act, 1959, Bengal Vagrancy Act, 1943 and the Cochin Vagrancy Act, 1945.
- In 2018, the Delhi High Court struck down some sections of the Act as unconstitutional, decriminalising begging.
- There is **no central Act on begging** in the country but many states have enacted their own laws, most of them based on the 1959 Act.

Reference

[The Indian Express | Bhopal's new order criminalising begging](#)